



City Council Memorandum

City of Arts & Innovation

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: JUNE 6, 2023
FROM: PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT WARDS: 1 & 2
SUBJECT: SPEED LIMIT ZONE REVISIONS ON WATKINS DRIVE – ORDINANCE

ISSUES:

Consider revision of the existing 45 MPH speed limit zone on Watkins Drive from Spruce Street to Valencia Hill Drive, changing the boundaries from “Spruce Street to Valencia Hill Drive” to “Spruce Street to Blaine Street”; and revision of the existing speed limit zone on the segment of Watkins Drive from Blaine Street to Valencia Hill Drive reducing the speed limit from 45 MPH to 40 MPH.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council introduce and adopt an Ordinance to:

1. Change the boundaries of the existing 45 MPH speed limit zone on Watkins Drive from “Spruce Street to Valencia Hill Drive” to “Spruce Street to Blaine Street”; and
2. Reduce the established speed limit on Watkins Drive from Blaine Street to Valencia Hill Drive from 45 MPH to 40 MPH.

BACKGROUND:

The proposal to revise the boundaries of the existing speed limit zone on Watkins Drive from Spruce Street to Valencia Hill Drive, changing the southerly zone boundary to Blaine Street, and reduce the established speed limit on the segment of Watkins Drive from Blaine Street to Valencia Hill Drive from 45 MPH to 40 MPH was scheduled to be considered by the Transportation Board (Board) on April 5, 2023; however, the meeting was cancelled due to lack of quorum. As a result, this proposal is being brought directly to City Council for consideration to avoid further delays in processing.

The Public Works Department performs speed surveys to establish appropriate speed limits on City streets including those classified as collector, arterial, and local roadways which do not meet the California Vehicle Code (CVC) definition of a “Residence District.” These surveys include consideration of prevailing speeds as determined by traffic engineering measurements, accident

data, unusual conditions not readily apparent to motorists, residential density, and pedestrian and bicyclist safety. These surveys are performed in accordance with the CVC and California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD) and enable both establishment and enforcement of the posted speed limit on many of our city streets.

DISCUSSION:

Watkins Drive from Spruce Street to Valencia Hill Drive is a two-lane roadway in the University of California, Riverside (UCR) area with multi-unit residential, St. George's Episcopal Church, commercial properties, UCR facilities (Child Development Center, Corporation Yard, etc.) located along the west side and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad / Perris Valley Line running along the east side of the street segment. The speed survey on file for this entire segment of Watkins Drive resulted in the adoption and posting of a 45 MPH speed limit. A restriping project which installed a two-way cycle track and adjacent striped parking areas along the west side of Watkins Drive between Blaine Street and Valencia Hill Drive resulted in changes to the roadway conditions prompting completion of updated speed surveys.

The Public Works Department conducted separate Traffic and Engineering Surveys on Watkins Drive for the segments between Spruce Street and Blaine Street and between Blaine Street and Valencia Hill Drive. The survey for Watkins Drive from Spruce Street to Blaine Street concluded the current 85th percentile speed to be 45 MPH and the survey for Watkins Drive from Blaine Street to Valencia Hill Drive concluded the current 85th percentile speed to be 42 MPH. As a result of the survey findings the Public Works Department is recommending the revision of the boundaries of the existing 45 MPH speed limit segment on Watkins Drive from "Spruce Street to Valencia Hill Drive" to "Spruce Street to Blaine Street" to retain the 45 MPH zone from Spruce Street to Blaine Street and reduction of the speed limit for the segment of Watkins Drive from Blaine Street to Valencia Hill Drive from 45 MPH to 40 MPH.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This proposal follows **Strategic Priority 2 - Community Well-Being** and **Goal 2.4 - Support programs and innovations that enhance community safety, encourage neighborhood engagement, and build public trust.**

Additionally, this item aligns with the five Cross-Cutting Threads as follows:

1. **Community Trust-** Development of Speed limit zones establish Community Trust through the transparent methodology and public process that is set forth by the California Vehicle Code which requires an Engineering and Traffic Survey to determine the appropriate speed limit for a specific street segment. The speed limit zones are a direct response to resident concerns about speed management along public streets.
2. **Equity-** The development of speed zones is a traffic calming tool that manages speeds on the public roadway to allow for the safe usage of motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility-** Speed limit zones are a cost-effective measure to regulate speeds on the roadway, to inform motorists about the design speed, and to increase safety.

4. **Innovation-** This project is neutral towards this cross-cutting thread.
5. **Sustainability & Resiliency-** The Engineering and Traffic Surveys that establish enforceable speed limits are valid for a maximum of 7 years and thus, the Police Services Department can enforce the speed limits once it is established on the roadway.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal impact of this action is \$400 for the cost of the sign removal, fabrication of the new sign, and installation. Funds are budgeted and available in the General Fund, Streets Maintenance, Signing Supplies account number 4110100-424143.

Prepared by: Gilbert Hernandez, Public Works Director
Certified as to
availability of funds: Edward Enriquez, Interim Assistant City Manager/Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Phaedra A. Norton, City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Ordinance
2. Site Map